

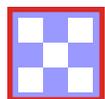
# Will I like cross stitching?

Who knows, really. But if these personality and values indicators describe you, then at least try it once in your life:



## “I like puzzles.”

Cross stitching is a puzzle in more ways than one. If you or your family enjoy jigsaw puzzles; matching shapes, patterns and colors; and seeing a finished version of the printed cover on the puzzle box, you should definitely give counted cross stitching a try. (About two days after I was discussing this correlation with my sales manager and business partner that I noticed my favorite needlework shop had put out a puzzle for patrons to relax with during their harried holiday shopping!)



## “I like to quilt.”

Cross stitching and quilting are closely related fabric arts featuring repeated or random patterns and some form of hand stitching. Quilting often results in larger items like blankets, pillows or wall coverings. Cross stitching results in a little broader set of smaller products like framed art and samplers, pillow & cushion covers, bell pulls, book-marks, decorative container covers (tins, bottles, etc.), ornaments, and decorative accents for apparel and housewares. One big difference is you can work on cross stitch just about anywhere and any time. Quilting is often less portable. Cross stitch blocks can be worked into a larger quilting pattern if background fabrics are chosen carefully for frequent mild cold-water washing. Cross stitch afghan projects may also interest you.



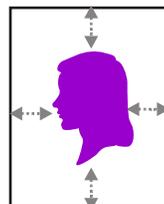
## “I want to reduce stress”

Many have noticed therapeutic qualities from cross stitching and improved feelings of self-worth that accompany a finished project. There is a comradery among stitchers and a sense of personal fulfillment in hand-crafted value. In many ways, it is an enjoyable journey, not just a finished project.

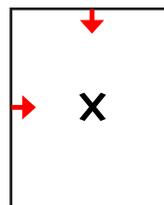


## Where do I start?

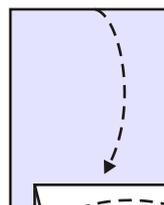
Your local needlework shop (LNS) will have fabric, floss, needle and charts (or try a small [carouselchart.com](http://carouselchart.com) chart).



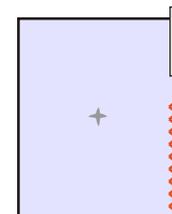
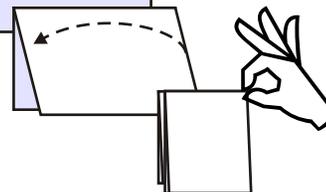
Most charts leave up to 3 inches (7.5 cm) of no-stitch border cloth all the way around to accommodate framing or additional construction seams to finish the piece. Double check pattern and instructions before cutting fabric. (Better to trim more later than try to add it back.)



Counted cross stitch charts are a happy mix of treasure map and jigsaw puzzle. Most begin in the middle, and stitching moves from one field of color to the next as the image emerges. Patterns come marked with arrows to show the center “x”-stitch to begin your project.



Find the center of your fabric by folding the fabric in half vertically, then in half again horizontally. Pinch the corner that has no open ends and then unfold your fabric to see the center marked in a neat pinch crease. That's where you start.



Some fabrics unravel easily, so tape or zig-zag edges to avoid fraying.



## “I want to create heirloom value.”

Nothing lasts forever, but a well-chosen, prepared and cared-for cross stitch can last longer than photographs and some other needlework arts. (Tapestries from the middle ages are still found today. While teaching college-level fashion courses, I distinctly remember viewing a remnant of needlework in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London that was dated in “B.C.” numbers!) For lasting value, choose a quality subject that is near and dear to your heart and render it in cross-stitch.



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